



Vinnies
good works

SOCIAL JUSTICE
NETWORK

Welcome to the Social Justice Newsletter for November 2022

NSW Election 2023

The St Vincent de Paul Society's [2023 Election Statement](#) outlines key steps the next NSW Government should take to create a housing system that works for everyone.

As the number of people experiencing housing stress, or without a safe and stable place to call home, continues to grow, it is clear a new approach is needed to avoid widening inequality and a future in which high rates of poverty and homelessness become the norm.

Our Statement outlines three headline priorities: creating a housing system that delivers on the right to home; protecting renters through fairer tenancy laws; funding specialist services for people who are homeless.

[You can read the full Statement here.](#) In the lead-up to the election, we're asking members of the Vinnies' Social Justice Network - Society members, volunteers, employees and supporters - to take action in support of its recommendations. It will take all of us, working together, to convince the people seeking to represent us from March 2023 to prioritise these actions. We will share opportunities to get involved over the coming months.

Right now, we are looking for people willing to meet with sitting MPs and candidates in their electorate to discuss the statement. Interested? Email social.justice@vinnies.org.au. We also invite all our subscribers to [endorse the Statement here.](#)



Uluru Statement recognised and Minister urges community conversations

This month the Uluru Statement from the Heart was formally awarded the 2021-22 Sydney Peace Prize. Representatives from the Society attended the Town Hall presentation and Redfern gala dinner in a show of support. The Society also attended a CEOs forum on activating support for the Uluru Statement with guest speakers the Minister for Indigenous Australians Linda Burney, Professor Megan Davis, and Pat Anderson AO.

Minister Burney urged everyone to have a conversation with people who need convincing to vote yes for a First Nations Voice. Professor Davis cited her studies of other successful movements for constitutional change and said it is citizen conversations that are critical to building support. All of the guest speakers spoke about the need for allies so that First Nations people do not have to carry the load alone.

The Society continues to raise awareness and build capacity among our networks in support of the Uluru Statement and Voice to Parliament. Last month we met with the Society's First Nations employees to get their views and input into our advocacy work. We heard about the importance of completing cultural awareness training, supporting people to have respectful conversations, and bridging the digital divide. We're incorporating this feedback into the next iteration of our Uluru Statement advocacy strategy.

At the *Activate 2022: Vinnies NSW Youth Convention* last weekend we co-facilitated a workshop session on the Uluru Statement headlined by Youth Dialogue Co-Chair, Bridget Cama. We were excited to see the interest and enthusiasm of so many young people to take action and be part of creating change.

This month we also released [Uluru Statement from the Heart - Vincentian Reflection](#), the fifth and latest resource in our series. We hope our members and networks will use the Reflection in their conferences and meetings.



Homes for People coalition launch

The Society attended a parliamentary briefing this month on *Homes for People*, hosted by Alex Greenwich MP and led by a coalition of four NSW housing campaigns. The coalition involves Make Renting Fair, Build Better Homes, Healthy Homes for Renters, and Ageing on the Edge NSW, all of which the Society actively supports.

Parliamentarians heard first hand stories from people with disability and older women about the challenge of finding affordable, secure, healthy and appropriate homes that met their needs, and the impact this has had on their lives and well-being. We welcome the coalition's calls for the next NSW Government to prioritise homes for people and their recommendations which are consistent with many of our state election asks.



Rental protections promised

A coalition of eight organisations, including the Society, wrote to all NSW MPs urging them to support rental reform. Our letter was in anticipation of a parliamentary debate on the NSW Greens Bill to end no-grounds evictions introduced in late October. Unfortunately, both major parties did not support listing the Bill for debate and due to timing it will not be considered in this parliamentary term.

Although NSW Labor did not support the Bill, the Society has welcomed the party's announcement it would end no-grounds evictions and replace them with a set of Reasonable Grounds. This is an ask in our election statement and is critical to providing better protection and security to renters in NSW. NSW Labor also committed to create a mechanism for tenants to transfer their bond between rental properties, which would benefit many low-

income and vulnerable people who struggle to cover their new rental property's bond while their old bond is cleared.



Join the Sydney Alliance Assembly

Calling all Vincentians in the Metro Region!

The Sydney Alliance is inviting us to participate in an Assembly with NSW Treasurer Matt Kean in Parramatta on Wednesday evening - 30th November.

The Alliance is calling for a fairer and more just Sydney in areas such as the costs of living, social and affordable housing, greater rights for renters, affordable and renewable energy and climate mitigation and adaption.

Following a meeting with the Treasurer in 2021 (pictured), this will be the most significant one between the NSW Government and the Sydney Alliance during this term of government. The evening will include a keynote address from the Treasurer, the sharing of stories and a case study related to the needs of western Sydney, and a call on the Treasurer for concrete commitments to act.

The event will run from 6.00 - 8.00pm at Parramatta Mission, 119 Macquarie Street, Parramatta. It is a free event and you can register [here](#).

Please email the Social Justice Team (social.justice@vinnies.org.au) to let us know that you will be attending so that we can catch up at the event.



Have your say on pets in rentals

The NSW Department of Customer Service is leading a consultation on keeping animals in rental properties. Current rental laws in NSW do not allow tenants to keep a pet without explicit approval from the landlord, who can refuse the request for no reason and without providing an explanation. Strata schemes can only refuse approval for pets if the animal causes unreasonable interference to others.

Around 70% of Australians have a pet and the lack of pet-friendly rentals is a significant issue, particularly for low-income and vulnerable people who have even less choice in the rental market. The lack of pet-friendly accommodation is why many women and children experiencing domestic and family violence do not leave their current housing.

The Society's services report that many people who are homeless have a pet for companionship, but the lack of pet-friendly accommodation options means they often choose to remain homeless rather than give up their pet who is their family.

Other jurisdictions including Victoria, Queensland, ACT and NT have all reformed their laws regarding pets in recent years. Ending the ban on pets in rentals is a key ask in the Society's state election statement and will form the basis of our submission to the consultation.

If you would like to share your experiences or input to our submission, please contact solange.frost@vinnies.org.au by Thursday 24 November. Alternatively you can make your own submission [here](#) by 2 December 2022.



New property tax legislation passed

The NSW Government's [Property Tax Reform](#) legislation was passed by Parliament this month, marking the first step towards a broad-based land tax system. First home buyers purchasing properties up to \$1.5 million now have a choice to pay an annual property tax instead of stamp duty. This option is estimated to be available to 97% of all first home buyers or about 55,000 people per year. While the Society broadly supports the introduction of a broad-based land tax, we identified concerns about the potential impact of the scheme on low-income and vulnerable households.

The Society, along with the Tenants' Union of NSW and Shelter NSW [wrote to the Premier and the NSW Parliamentary Committee](#) reviewing the legislation to raise these concerns and ask for low-income households to be protected and to monitor any unintended consequences of the scheme, including on private renters. The Committee noted our [submission](#) and recommended that due to limited time for review that stakeholders' concerns be addressed during consideration of the bill by Parliament. NSW Labor has committed to repeal the legislation if it wins government in 2023.



Six Cities Region: An opportunity for more affordable housing

The Society made a submission last month to the Greater Cities Commission's [discussion paper](#) on the Six Cities Region. The Region will subsume the existing Greater Sydney Region incorporating Central Coast, Newcastle, Wollongong, and Shoalhaven regions. By 2041 it will be home for around 80 percent of the NSW population. Given its significance, the Society's submission focused on the housing 'region shaper' calling for bold social and affordable housing targets so the land in these areas is used to create intergenerational public value, particularly for the most vulnerable in our state.

The Commission has released a summary of feedback to the consultation process with a more detailed report due shortly. The Society will also participate in the Commission's upcoming roundtables exploring each of the region shapers in more detail.

Events

Climate Listening in Parramatta

Wednesday 23 November 2022, Parramatta Mission. [Email for more info.](#)

International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

Friday 25 November 2022
Office for Justice, Ecology and Peace online event, [Register here](#)

Alliance Assembly with NSW Treasurer

Matt Kean
Wednesday 30 November 2022
Parramatta, venue tbc. [Email for more info.](#)

International Day of People with Disability

Saturday 3 December 2022
[See resources here.](#)

Is there a local social justice event or news item you'd like everyone to know about?

CONTACT US